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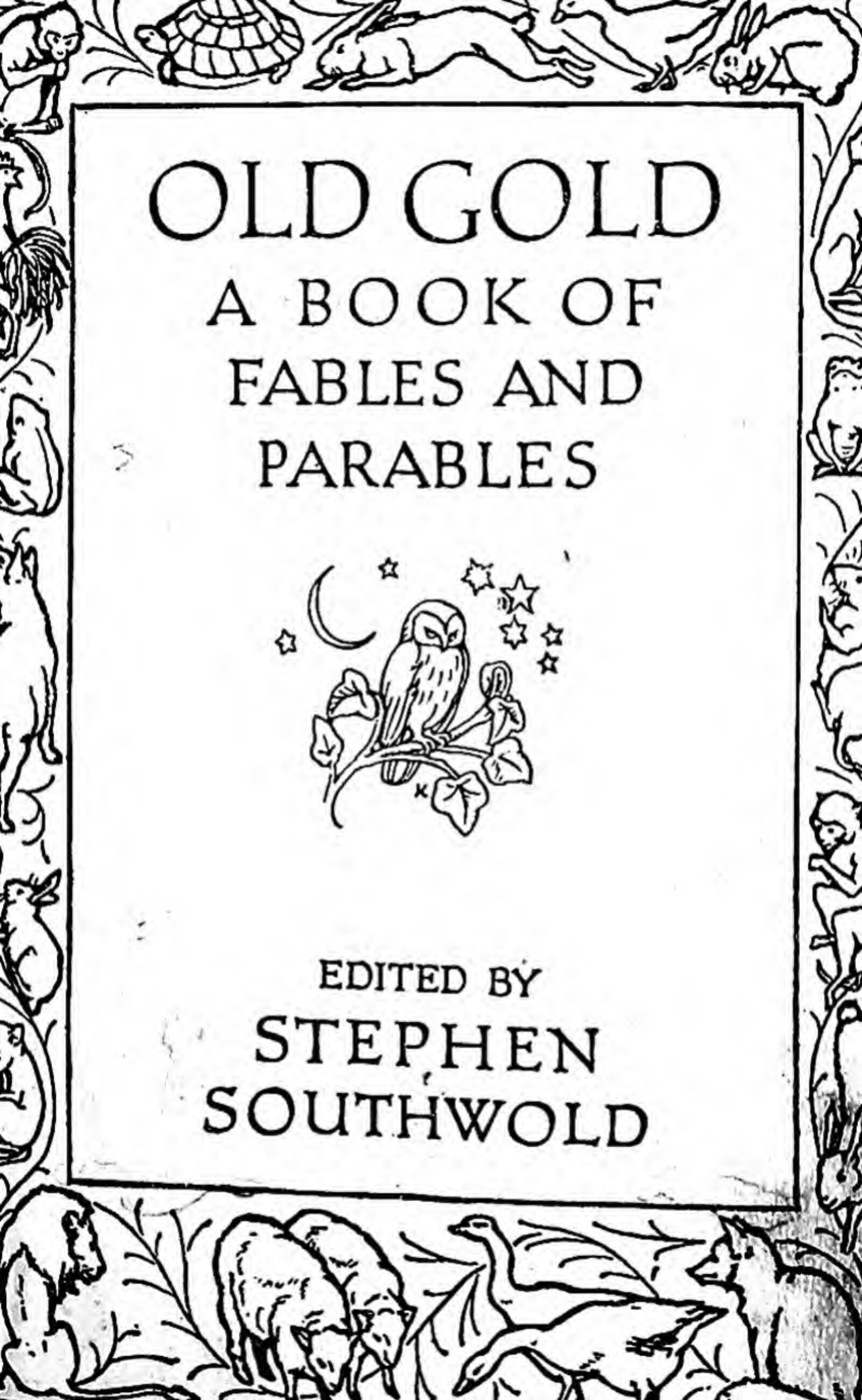
The **KINGS TREASURIES**
OF LITERATURE



GENERAL EDITOR
SIR A. T. QUILLER COUCH



NEW YORK E. P. DUTTON AND COMPANY



OLD GOLD

A BOOK OF FABLES AND PARABLES



EDITED BY
**STEPHEN
SOUTHWOLD**

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TO
DESMOND GRAHAM

ÆSOP

Who will trust when all men doubt me?
Who will love when all men flout me?
Pain or sorrow,
Who will follow?
I will, Brother, said the dog.

.

Who will stoop to ease my burden?
Walk with me nor ask for guerdon?
When ills rend me,
Who'll befriend me?
I will, Brother, said the horse.

.

When my eyes are tired with weeping,
When my nights go down unsleeping,
Dolour near me,
Who will cheer me?
I will, Brother, said the lark.

.

Sad or laughing, strong or failing,
Whereso'er my dreams go sailing,
Who's my Brother?
We, none other,
Said the creatures of the earth.

S. S.



INTRODUCTION

Most of the stories in this book are very little ones. These short tales are called fables. Nearly all of them were written by a slave named Æsop, who lived in Greece nearly twenty-five hundred years ago.

This is so long ago that we do not know very much about the man who wrote these wonderful little stories. But we do know a few things about him, and we know them because although he was a slave his tales made him famous, and so the men who lived at the same time as Æsop, and wrote the history of their times, made mention of him in their writings.

We learn that he was a slave and might be bought and sold like a beast of burden. We learn that he was terribly deformed and pitifully ugly to look upon. And he owed his name to his dark gipsy-like skin, for Æsop and Ethiop are the same, and both mean black. We learn, too, that he came to a dreadful death. He was taken by his enemies and thrown over a precipice.

These things history tells us, but we can find out much more about Æsop by reading his fables. We know that he loved birds and beasts and all the little things of the earth. About these he wrote his stories, and although he makes his birds and beasts talk like human beings, they remain true to their own natures: the fox, the lion, the mouse or the crow may talk

the language of human beings, but they act as we know foxes, lions and mice and crows do. We may be quite sure that Æsop had watched and studied the habits of wild creatures, and understood them as well as a man may do. And because he understood them he loved them.

We shall learn, too, from his fables that although his life might seem to us a life of bitter hardship and unhappiness, yet he found time to jest and be merry. And in his heart there was a great pity for the weak, the unhappy, the desolate and the lonely.

Not all the fables here were written by Æsop. Some of them were written by a very clever and witty French poet named La Fontaine, who was born in France a few years after the death of our own great poet Shakespeare.

La Fontaine wrote his fables in the form of little poems. He wrote, of course, in French, and some day perhaps you may like to read them just as he wrote them down. But so many clever men have translated them into English that we can enjoy them almost as well as if we could read French.

There have been many other men who wrote fables but these two, Æsop the poor Greek slave, and La Fontaine the witty French poet, are the two greatest fabulists (as the writers of fables are called) who have ever lived.

You may perhaps wonder why Æsop and La Fontaine wrote these delightful little tales of animals and birds and insects. Did they write them just as

stories to interest people and to amuse them? Or were they trying to do something more than make their readers smile? I am sure you will discover this for yourselves. When you have read a fable, I would like you to pause for a while before you go on to the next one, and to ask yourselves whether you have learnt anything from the fable beyond the little story itself. I am quite certain you will, after you have thought for a moment, laugh and say, "Why, of course, the story means . . ."

We now come to the other stories in this book. They are not about animals, but men and women. They are called parables. They were not written down at first, but were stories told to the people by Jesus. The people who listened to them carried them away in their hearts, and no doubt told their friends and perhaps their children. And then after a while men wrote them down, and so we are able to read them for ourselves.

The men who wrote down the parables were the Evangelists—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. And because they themselves heard Jesus speak the parables, you will find the same parables very often in the writings of more than one of them.

St. Matthew and St. Luke both wrote down a large number of them; St. Mark wrote four and St. John but two. And while, as I have said, you will find the same parables repeated, you will also find now and

then a parable that appears only in the writings of one of the Evangelists.

Unlike the fables, no one has ever tried to re-write the parables. The reason is that they are already in such beautiful language, that the wisest man in all the world could not better it, however hard he might try.

You will see for yourselves that in one way the fables and the parables are alike. Just as you will discover that the fables are a story and something more as well, so in like manner are the parables.

Æsop and La Fontaine were in fact teachers. They were very wise teachers, and they knew that there is no need for a lesson to be dull and dry. Indeed, had their lessons been dull and dry, no one would have listened to them, and so they would have taught in vain. Therefore they put the things they wished to teach in the form of a tale, knowing well that their readers would be quite clever enough to find out for themselves what they wished them to learn.

In like manner Jesus, Who is the greatest teacher the world has ever known, knew very well that grown-ups were the same as children in their love of a story. And so, when He wished to teach them something, He made up a story about it. And these stories of Jesus are the parables.

Now you all know how hard it is often enough to remember lessons, and how delightfully easy it is to remember tales. And so the people who read Æsop and La Fontaine, and the people who listened

to Jesus, found it quite simple to remember the stories, and therefore they remembered the lessons too.

I am afraid I have been talking a lot about lessons, and that you are beginning to grow a little alarmed and a little impatient. I want you to read these fables and parables as stories, to enjoy them, laugh over them, talk about them and think over them. As for the lesson part, that can be left to take care of itself.

At the end of this book you will find some questions, which I hope you will enjoy trying to answer. I have made them quite as hard as I could answer myself, because I am quite sure that the very youngest one of all of you is a good deal cleverer than he believes himself.

You will also find much more about fables and parables and fabulists. Although it is written chiefly for grown-ups, I think you will find, that when you have read the book through, there is a great deal in the grown-up section that you will find interesting. The words will be a little longer and more difficult, but if you read more slowly that need not bother you very much.

STEPHEN SOUTHWOLD.

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FABLES

THE FROG AND THE OX

As an ox was grazing in a marshy meadow, he happened to set his foot on a family of young frogs, and trod almost the whole of them to death. One, however, escaped, and telling his mother of the sad fate of the rest of her family, he said, "And, mother, it was such a big beast; I never saw such a large one in my life." "Was it as large as this?" said the old frog, blowing herself out as much as possible. "Oh!" said the little one, "a great deal bigger, mother." "Well, was it as big as this?" and she puffed out her speckled skin more. "O, mother! it is no use your trying to make yourself as big as it; for were you even to burst yourself, you would not be near its size." The mother frog was much annoyed at this remark; so she once more tried to increase her size, and she burst herself indeed.

THE TORTOISE AND THE TWO DUCKS

A TORTOISE, discontented with her lowly life, had a great desire to see foreign countries. She told two ducks of her wish, and they immediately said, "We shall be happy, for a fair price, to transport you to

any country you please." The passage-money having been agreed upon and paid, the ducks said, "You must take this narrow piece of stick in your teeth and hold it fast, and we will take hold of it at each end and carry you between us; and as you value your life be sure to keep your mouth shut." The journey began. Presently they passed over a large crowd of people, who exclaimed in astonishment, "What a wonderful sight! the queen of tortoises with her house on her back." "Yes, yes," said the tortoise, "you are quite right; I am the queen." But it would have been better if she had held her tongue, for the moment she opened her mouth she let go the stick, and falling, was dashed to pieces on a rock below.

THE FOX WITHOUT A TAIL

A FOX who had been caught in a trap was very glad to save his life by the loss of his magnificent tail. But when he went into society again, he was so ashamed of his defect that he became quite weary of his life. However, as he could not recover his tail, he determined to make the best of a bad matter. So he called a meeting of the rest of the foxes, and proposed to them that they should follow his example. "What is the use of tails?" said he; "they are ugly, draggling, unnecessary appendages; and it is astonishing that we foxes have put up with them so long. You have no idea of the comfort and ease of

being without them; for my own part, I have never been so active and so brisk as I have since I got rid of my tail. I therefore propose, my brethren, that you should profit by my experience, and that from this day you should get rid of your tails." Upon this a sly old thief of a fox, who had formed a shrewd idea as to the reason of the loss of the fox's tail, stepped forward and said, "It strikes me, my friend, that you have found it convenient to part with your tail; and when we are in a similar case perhaps we shall be happy to do the same."

THE FROGS WHO DESIRED A KING

IN olden times the frogs ranged in liberty over the ponds and lakes. Now at last they grew weary of their tame mode of life, and desiring some change, they assembled together, and with no little noise, besought Jupiter to send them a king to keep them in better order. Jupiter was much amused at the petition of the frogs, and with a view to humour them, he threw into their midst a log, saying, "There is a king for you!" The sudden fall of the log caused a mighty splash, which sent all the frogs hither and thither; and it was some time before any of them ventured to take a peep at their new lord and master. At length some of the more courageous among them swam towards him, where they were soon followed by the rest; and seeing that

there was no motion in him, they leaped upon his back, and capered and danced upon him with the greatest contempt for his majesty. But such a king did not at all please them; and so they again sent messengers to Jupiter to beg for a king who had some life, motion, and activity in him. Whereupon Jupiter sent a stork, saying he hoped this would suit them. The stork no sooner came upon his new subjects than he began to devour them one after the other as fast as he possibly could. The second king being less to their liking than the first, the frogs immediately sent Mercury with a private message to Jupiter beseeching him to have mercy upon them, and either to grant them another king or restore them to their former condition. But Jupiter would not listen to him. "No," said he, "it was their own wish, and they are only suffering the punishment due to their folly and vanity."

THE FARMER AND HIS SONS

A FARMER, a short time before his death, called his sons to him, and said, "My children, I am about to die; my lands I leave among you, and in one part of the field there is a treasure, which if you diligently search for, you will be sure to find." The sons thought that he referred to a treasure of gold and silver; so as soon as he was dead, they set to work and dug up

every inch of ground. Three times did they turn up the soil, but they found no treasure. At the time of the harvest, however, their crops were more abundant and fetched a better price than any of their neighbours', and fully repaid the trouble they had taken.

THE CROW AND THE PITCHER

A CROW, ready to die with thirst, saw at a distance a pitcher standing by a well. He flew with joy towards it, but how great was his disappointment, to find that though there

was some water in it, it was so low that with all his straining and stretching, he was not able to reach it! He then tried to break the pitcher, or to overturn it; but he was not strong enough.



At last he thought of a plan. Seeing some pebbles lying near, he dropped a great number of them, one by one, into the pitcher. Gradually, as the pebbles fell, the water rose to the brim, and he was able to quench his thirst.

THE LION, THE BEAR, AND THE FOX

A LION and a bear, while roaming in the forest, found the carcase of a fawn, and a question arose as to which of them had the better right to it. Not being able to settle the matter in a friendly way, they fell to blows. The contest was long and severe. At length both were so faint with loss of blood that they lay panting on the ground quite exhausted. A fox, seeing their helplessness, stepped in between them and carried off the prize. "Ah!" said they, "what foolish creatures we have been! The end of all our fighting has been to give that sly villain the fox a good dinner."

THE FOX AND THE WOODMAN

A FOX, being closely pursued by the hounds and well-nigh worn out, came up to a man cutting wood, and asked if he would show him any spot where he might hide himself. The man told him that he might conceal himself in his hut. The fox crept in and hid himself in a corner. Very soon the hunters came up, and asked the man if he knew where the fox was. He said he did not, but at the same moment he pointed his finger to the place where the fox lay concealed. The hunters, however, did not understand what the man meant, and so went on their way. As soon as they were out of sight, the fox began to

march off. The man said, "Is this the way you repay me for saving your life?" "Save my life, indeed!" said the fox, "where would my life have been had the hunters understood your fingers as well as they did your voice?"

THE ASS, THE COCK, AND THE LION

As an ass and a cock were feeding together, a lordly lion passed by, who, as soon as he cast his eyes on the ass, resolved to make a meal of him. The lion, it is said, has a great horror of the crowing of a cock, and it happened that, just as the lion was in the act of springing on the ass, the cock sent forth a loud and shrill crow. The lion straightway took to his heels as fast as he possibly could. When the ass saw this, he fancied that it was through fear of him. He therefore plucked up courage, and went in pursuit of the royal beast. But the lion turning round, and seeing who it was that was running after him, stopped in his flight, laid hold of the foolish ass, and soon tore him in pieces.

THE PEACOCK AND THE MAGPIE

THE birds once assembled together to choose from their number a king. The peacock, with his gaudy plumage, was one of the candidates, and the silly

birds, taken with his bright feathers, chose him amidst loud clapping of their wings. They were on the point of placing the crown upon his head when a magpie stepped forth from his place, and thus addressed the new king: "Please your majesty, may one of the most unworthy of your subjects be so bold as to ask one question? We have chosen you as our lord and king; we have placed our lives in your hands, and it is to you that we have to look for protection and for wisdom in the time of danger. If, therefore, the eagle, or the vulture, or the kite, should at any time molest us, might I ask your majesty how you purpose to defend us?" This question the peacock was unable to answer; and the birds, seeing that they had been too rash in their choice, proceeded to select another king. From this time the peacock has been considered one of the vainest birds, and the magpie one of the wisest.

THE TWO RATS, THE FOX, AND THE EGG

Two rats, while searching for food, found an egg. They were much rejoiced at this discovery, and were just about to divide the spoil, when, to their dismay, they spied the face of a fox peeping behind some bushes. "We must not lose our egg," said the rats; "we must manage to place it in safety as soon as possible. But how are we to do it? Pack it up and



THE BEAR SMELT AND SNIFFED AT HIM ALL OVER

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carry it with our forefeet? That will take too much time..Shall we roll it along? No, it may be broken." At last a bright idea struck them. The fox was still at some distance and their nest was near; so one of them laid himself on his back, took the egg between his paws and allowed the other to drag him along by the tail. With a few jolts and some slight bruises they succeeded in bringing the egg safely to their nest.

THE TRAVELLER AND THE BEAR

Two men were travelling through a wood, which was much infested with wild beasts. They therefore agreed to stand by each other in the case of any sudden danger. They had not proceeded far before a savage bear rushed out upon them. One of them, forgetting his companion and the promises, immediately ran to a tree and climbed up into its branches. The other, thus left to himself, felt that he had no chance against the bear, and remembering that he had heard that that animal will not touch a dead body, he threw himself flat on his face, and pretended to be dead. The bear came up to him as he thus lay, smelt and sniffed at him all over, and at length, feeling satisfied that there was no life in the body before him, walked back again into the wood. Upon this the coward descended from his hiding-place, and asked with a smile of his companion what it was that the

bear had whispered to him; "for I noticed," said he, "that he put his mouth very close to your ear." "Why," replied the other, "he gave me this very sensible piece of advice—never to trust those who in the hour of trial refuse to stand by their friends."

THE FOX AND THE GOAT

A FOX was one day drinking at a well when his feet slipped and he fell into the water. It was not deep enough to drown him, yet, with all his efforts, poor Reynard could not get out. Presently a thirsty goat looked in, and seeing the fox at the bottom, asked him if the water were good. "Oh, yes," said the fox, "it is beautiful, and there is plenty of it." In jumped the goat, and in a moment the fox leaped on to his back, and thence out of the well. "Aha, my friend!" said he, as he stood in safety on the brink, "if your brains had been equal to your beard you'd have looked before you leaped!" and then the cunning fellow ran away and left the poor goat in the water.

THE EAGLE AND THE JACKDAW

AN eagle swooped down from his eyrie upon a lamb, and bore off his prize high into the air. A jackdaw, who was sitting on the branches of an elm,

thought that he could do the same; so having selected a sheep for his prey, he came down with all his force on to its back. His claws became entangled in the wool, and in his struggles to free himself he made such a cawing and fluttering that he attracted the notice of the shepherd, who coming up, easily captured him, clipped his wings, and took him home to amuse his family.

THE SHEPHERD-BOY AND THE WOLF

A SHEPHERD-BOY, who tended his sheep in a meadow adjoining a village, was in the habit of amusing himself by crying out "A wolf! a wolf!" as if a wolf were attacking his sheep. This trick succeeded several times. The inhabitants of the village, leaving their work, came running to his assistance with axes and clubs to destroy the wolf; but as each time they found that the boy was only laughing at them, they resolved for the future to pay no attention to his cries. One day the wolf did come indeed; and the boy cried lustily, "The wolf! the wolf! help! help!" but it was all to no purpose, as his neighbours thought he was only at his old game again. So the sheep were devoured by the wolf.

THE FLY AND THE BULL

A FLY had settled herself upon the horn of a bull and was fearful lest her weight might be too much for him.

"Pray, pardon me," said the fly, "for the liberty I have taken in settling upon you, but if I press too heavily upon you, I will at once fly away. You have only to say the word."

"Oh, madam fly, is it you?" replied the bull. "Do not worry; you are not so heavy as you fancy. In fact I had no idea you were on my head at all, and it is the same to me whether you go or stay."

THE ACORN AND THE PUMPKIN

A YOKEL seeing a large pumpkin growing on its small mean vine exclaimed, "How stupid it is for pumpkins to grow on such little vines! Now if *I* had made the world I should have hung splendid pumpkins high up in the air upon giant oak-trees. Then they would really have looked fine—much finer than silly little acorns."

Being tired then from such a great thought the yokel lay down for a nap beneath the tall oak-tree.

He settled himself cosily upon his back and had just closed his eyes when a sudden sharp blow upon

his chin caused him to sit up with a start. He found that an acorn had fallen from the oak and had struck his chin and made it bleed.

"Bless my soul!" he exclaimed, feeling the wound, "what a mercy it is that pumpkins do not grow on trees!"

THE WOLF TURNED SHEPHERD

A WOLF who daily found it grow more difficult to steal sheep from the shepherd and his dog thought of a cunning trick. He dressed himself as the shepherd with hat and coat and crook and pipe. And round the hat he wrote "I am Willie, the shepherd of these sheep."

He then stole to where Willie the real shepherd and his dog lay sleeping beside their sheep.

"Now," said the wolf to himself, "if I can only imitate Willie's voice I will drive the sheep all away and devour them at my leisure."

And so, lifting up his voice, he spoke as nearly in the shepherd's voice as he could. But so loud and harsh were his tones that the woods resounded with the echo, and Willie and his dog awoke with a start.

The wolf made off in alarm, but he tripped over the long tails of the coat, and the shepherd caught him and soundly thrashed him.

THE GARDENER AND THE BEAR

ONCE upon a time a gardener gave up all his time to tend his garden until it became a very paradise of fruits and flowers.

Now one day when out walking he came upon a bear. The bear followed him like a big dog, and presently the gardener, seeing how gentle the bear was, made friends with him, and at last took him home to live with him in his fair garden.

They lived happily together for a long while, and it was the bear's custom to sit beside the gardener when he slept in his garden in the sunshine, and keep the flies off his face.

One day while the gardener slept, the fond bear noticed a fly which kept alighting on the gardener's mouth. As soon as the bear drove it away it would again settle on the gardener's mouth.

At last in a rage the bear took a great stone with which to crush the fly. The blow indeed killed the fly, but it knocked out the teeth of the unlucky gardener.

THE TWO PEASANTS AND THE CLOUD

GLOOMY John and smiling William, who were peasants, were out walking one day when a black cloud appeared in the sky.

"Alas!" said gloomy John, "that will bring us misfortune. It means hail, and the hail will destroy our crops, ruin our harvest and bring us to starvation."

"Nonsense!" laughed smiling William, "that cloud merely means a nice refreshing rain, which is the very thing our crops need. We shall then have an abundant harvest and be rich. Let us drink a cup of ale to celebrate it."

But gloomy John would not have it; and after wrangling and jangling over it they were preparing to fight, when a brisk wind arose and blew the black cloud out of sight.

THE LION GOING TO WAR

ONCE in Jungledom the lion gathered together all the animals to lead them to war.

He gave to each his special task. The elephants were to carry all the loads and crush the enemy with their weight. The bears should lead the charge. The foxes should arrange the cunning plans, and the monkeys were to beguile the foe with tricks.

One of the animals cried out, "We do not want the stupid donkeys and the cowardly hares, so you may tell them to stay away."

But the lion king replied, "To a wise monarch all his subjects are of value. The braying donkeys shall be our trumpeters, and the speedy hares shall carry our royal messages."

THE MONKEY AND THE SPECTACLES

ONCE upon a time a monkey in his old age grew weak-sighted. He had heard men say that this did not matter if one provided oneself with glasses. Thereupon the monkey bought himself six pairs of spectacles.

Having got the spectacles, he turned them first this way and then that, put them on the top of his head, round his neck, fastened them to his tail, smelled them, shook them and licked them. But all this was of course to no purpose, and he saw no better than before.

"Good lack!" cried the monkey, "what a fool I am to listen to the lies men tell. These things are of no use whatever."

And, chattering with rage and disgust he threw them all against a rock and shattered them to bits.

THE LION AND THE HARE

A LION and a hare once became good friends.

One day the hare said to the lion, "Oh, mighty one, is it true that the crowing of a cock so frightens lions that they run away?"

"It is indeed true," replied the lion. "But you need not be surprised. We large and powerful

animals have often a weakness of that kind. It is well known that the grunt of a pig will alarm the bravest elephant."

"Bless my ears!" said the hare; "how very curious. And of course," she went on, "that will explain why we hares are so afraid of dogs!"

THE MOON IN THE POND

ONCE upon a time a merchant went on his travels. He came one day to a village, and just outside the village boundary there was a pond.

The merchant saw a crowd of villagers round the pond, and thinking something was the matter, he stopped to watch.

He found they had armed themselves with brooms, rakes, and pitchforks, and were reaching into the pond with them, raking and scraping and poking and sweeping.

He inquired what was the matter and they replied, "Matter! matter enough! See, the moon's tumbled into the pond, and we can't get her out."

The merchant burst out laughing, telling them to look up at the moon in the sky, and explaining to them that it was only the moon's reflection they could see.

But they would not listen, and angrily calling him a ninny and a nincompoop, they drove him away.

THE WIND AND THE SUN

ONCE upon a time a dispute arose between the wind and the sun as to which of them was the stronger.

They agreed to test their powers upon a traveller, trying which should be the first to get his cloak off.

The wind began it and blew and blew and blew with a cold and biting blast. To the blast, too, was added an icy shower of rain. But the harder the wind blew, the tighter did the man clasp his cloak around him.

Then the sun tried. Breaking through the rain-clouds and driving them away, he shone upon the traveller his warm and welcome rays.

The traveller forgot the chilling wind, and as the sun shone on him more and more strongly, he at last became so warm that he took off his cloak and hung it over his arm.

THE VAIN JACKDAW

ONE day a jackdaw saw some peacock's feathers lying on the ground. He dressed himself up in them and tried to pass himself off as a peacock.

He succeeded very well for a time, but when he entered the garden where the real peacocks were, they soon discovered the cheat, and attacking him with their sharp bills, soon stripped him of his borrowed plumage.

He then tried to return to his old friends and companions, but they would have none of him, and drove him from amongst them saying, "It is your own fault. If you had been content to be a jackdaw you would not now suffer this harsh treatment."

THE FLIES AND THE POT OF HONEY

A POT of honey having been upset, the flies, as their way is with sweet things, settled in swarms upon it.

When they had had their fill and wished to fly away, they were unable to do so, as their feet had stuck fast in the honey.

The more they tried to get away, the more they clogged their feet and wings. And so at last they died in the sweets around them.

THE DOG IN THE MANGER

A CHURLISH dog lay in a manger full of hay. A hungry ox came near wishing to eat his food, when the ill-natured cur began to snarl and snap at him.

"What a selfish animal you are!" said the ox. "You cannot eat the hay yourself nor will you allow others to partake of it."

THE OLD WOMAN AND HER MAIDS

AN old woman had two maids whom she called every morning to get to their work at the crowing of the cock.

Now the two maids were very fond of bed, and thinking that the cock was the cause of their being obliged to rise so early, they determined to wring its neck, so that their mistress would not be able to tell what time it was.

But no sooner had they done this than the old woman, afraid lest she should oversleep and thereby allow her maids to lie too long a-bed, was constantly arousing them even at midnight.

THE OAK AND THE WILLOW

AFTER a stormy night a father and son went into the field to see what damage the storm had caused.

The son said, "Look, father, there is the strong oak-tree lying yonder on the ground, while the slender willow stands as upright as ever. I should have thought that the willow would have been uprooted and not the proud oak which has lived so many years."

"My son," answered the father, "the oak was broken because it fought against the storm and would

not yield to its mighty strength. The willow, however, gave way to the gale, and thus by avoiding the fury still lives."

THE DOG AND THE SHADOW

A DOG was crossing a rivulet with a piece of meat which he had just stolen from a butcher's stall. As he crossed he looked into the stream and saw, as he supposed, another dog with another piece of meat in his mouth.

Now, desiring to possess that also, he made a snap at it. But alas! the morsel he was carrying dropped into the water and immediately sank to the bottom.

THE FOX AND THE GRAPES

ONE fine day in autumn a fox crept into a garden, where the ripe grapes were hanging in clusters from the trellis-work against a sunny wall.

He sat looking at them with longing eyes, and at last jumped up and snatched at the lowest bunch. But alas! it was beyond his reach.

Again and again he tried with no better success, and at last, finding his attempts were all in vain, he tossed his head and walked away muttering to himself, "Pah! why should I trouble myself about them; I am sure they are sour grapes."

THE TWO COCKS

Two cocks fought for mastery in a farmyard. The combat was long and furious. At length one of them gave in, and crept into a corner of the hen-house.

The conqueror flew up to the top of the house, clapped his wings, and crowed loudly at his victory.

At this moment an eagle, who was hovering near, heard the cock's loud clamour, and pouncing upon him bore him away in his talons.

THE ANT AND THE DOVE

A THIRSTY ant went to drink from a clear limpid stream, but falling into the water he was almost drowned.

A dove, who chanced to be sitting on a near tree, saw the danger of the poor ant, and plucking a leaf she let it drop in the water close to him. The ant immediately climbed to the top, and the breeze wafted him safely to the bank.

Not long afterwards the ant noticed a fowler spreading his net to capture the dove. The ant bit the man in the heel, which caused the fowler to give so sudden a start, that the dove took the alarm and made her escape.

X THE WOLF AND THE HORSE

As a wolf was roaming about in search of food he came across a field of oats. These not being to his taste he passed by.

Presently he saw a horse feeding in a field, and going up to him said in a very friendly manner, "I have found a field of oats which will just please you. I have eaten none myself but have kept them all for you, as it will give me great pleasure to watch you enjoying them."

"Thank you very much," replied the wise horse, "but I expect that if wolves could eat oats I should never have heard anything about them."

THE ASS IN THE LION'S SKIN

AN ass, having found the skin of a lion, put it on and amused himself by frightening all the animals he met.

Presently, seeing a fox, he tried to alarm him also. But Reynard, noticing his long ears sticking out, and hearing his voice, at once knew him. "Ah!" said the fox, "I should have been afraid too if I had not heard you bray!"

THE LION AND THE MOUSE

ONE day, as a lion was sleeping in his den, a mouse scampered over the nose of the royal beast. The lion, thus aroused from his sleep, clapped his paw on the little intruder, and was just about to put him to death, when the mouse begged of him in piteous tones to spare his life, and not to stain his noble character with the blood of so small and insignificant an animal. The lion, amused at the fright of the little creature, at once let him go. A short time after this, the lion, while ranging the woods in search of his prey, was caught in the snare of the hunter. He tried with all his strength to get free, but not being successful he set up such a roar as made the whole forest echo again. The mouse, hearing the voice and recognising it as that of his former friend, ran to the spot, and told the lion that he would soon release him. He then set to work, and with his sharp little teeth gnawed asunder the fastenings of the snare and set the lion at liberty.

THE COCK AND THE JEWEL

As a young cock was seeking for food for himself and his hens in a farmyard, he happened to scratch up a bright, glittering jewel, which by some accident had

been dropped there. Not seeing what use such an article could be to him, he pretended to despise it; so, shaking his head very wisely, he said, "You may be a very fine thing to those who can value you, but for my part my taste lies in quite another direction. I would rather have a barley-corn than all the jewels of the world."

THE BOYS AND THE FROG

A NUMBER of heedless boys were one day playing by the side of a pond, and seeing that it contained a great number of frogs, they began to pelt them with stones. They had killed several of them, when an old frog, the father of some of the lost ones, raised his head above the water and cried out, "Stop your sport, boys! this may be play to you, but it is death to us."

THE FOX AND THE CROW

A CROW having taken a piece of cheese from a cottage window, flew with her prize to the bough of a tree where she intended to enjoy it at her leisure. A sly fox having observed her, came and sat at the foot of the tree, planning how he might cheat her out of the tempting morsel. "Bless me, my dear Mrs.

Crow!" began the fox; "I am surprised that thy exceeding loveliness never struck me before; how perfect is thy form; how bright and glossy thy plumage; and what a graceful attitude! I have never heard thy sweet voice, but if it equals the beauty of thy body it must indeed be charming." The crow, tickled with this flattery, wriggled and twisted herself about. Then, desiring to show the fox how beautifully she could sing, she opened her mouth with the intention of sending forth a musical caw, when down dropped the cheese. This was at once snapped up by the fox, who trotted off, laughing to himself at the success of his plan and at the simplicity of the crow.

THE HUSBANDMAN AND THE STORK

A HUSBANDMAN, wishing to protect his new-sown corn from the cranes, set a net in his field to catch them. One morning he took several, and among their number there happened to be a stork. "Spare my life," cried the stork; "I am no thieving crane; I am, as you see, a poor, harmless, innocent stork, the most pious and dutiful of all birds. I always honour and help my parents; I am ever attending to their wants. I——" "That may all be very well," interrupted the husbandman, "but seeing that I have

caught you in the company of those who were destroying my corn, you must suffer with them." And with these words he wrung the stork's neck.

THE ASS AND THE LAPDOG

A CERTAIN man had an ass and a lapdog. He was a kind master to them. The ass, it is true, had to work hard in drawing wood and water, but he had a comfortable stable and plenty of good hay to eat. The lapdog accompanied his master in all his walks, frisking and skipping about him; and when at home he was allowed to lie in his lap. The ass, becoming discontented with his lot, thought that he too would be fondled and caressed if he imitated the actions of the dog. So one day he followed his master into the house, and commenced to gambol and caper about in a very awkward manner. The master at first could not help laughing at the strange antics of the ass; but he soon found that it was no joke. The ass continued to jump about, damaging the furniture, and breaking the crockery; and approaching closer to him, the stupid creature at length began to paw him with his heavy feet, and to show an inclination to get into his lap. This was too much—the master called loudly for assistance. His servants entered, and so belaboured the silly animal with their heavy sticks, that they soon proved to him that an ass is not at all times to be desired as a companion.

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB

ONE very hot day a wolf and a lamb happened to come together to quench their thirst at a clear, silvery brook that ran down by the side of a mountain. The wolf took his stand upon the higher ground, and the lamb at some distance farther down the stream. The wolf, seeing that the lamb was fat and plump, determined to pick a quarrel with her. "What do you mean," said the wolf, glaring upon the lamb with his fierce eyes, "by making the water so muddy that I cannot possibly drink it?" The lamb mildly replied, "I cannot see how that can be, as the water runs from you to me, not from me to you." "That may be," said the wolf, in a tone of anger, "but I have been told that six months ago you made fun of me." "Really," answered the lamb, "you must be mistaken, as at that time I was not born." The wolf upon this fell into a dreadful passion, and drawing closer to the lamb, said, "Well, if it were not you, it must have been some of your family; so it is all the same, and just now I am in want of my supper." So saying he leapt at the throat of the poor innocent lamb and tore her in pieces.

THE WAR-HORSE AND THE ASS

A WAR-HORSE, decked with military trappings, came thundering along the road, making the ground ring again with the sound of his trampling hoofs. A

patient ass happened at the time to be slowly trudging along the same road with a heavy load on his back. The charger loudly ordered the poor ass to get out of his way, or he would tread him under his feet. The ass, not wishing to quarrel with the horse, meekly stepped on one side, and allowed him to go by. Not long after this, the horse was sent to the wars, and was there badly wounded. Being now no longer fit for military service, he was stripped of all his fine ornaments and sold to a farmer. The next time the ass saw the horse, the latter was with great effort dragging a cart; and the ass then understood what little cause he had to envy one who in his heyday had treated with scorn those whom he considered his inferiors.

THE BUNDLE OF STICKS

A FATHER had seven sons who were always quarrelling with one another. This distressed the father very much. One day he desired all of them to come to his chamber. He there laid before them seven sticks which were fastened together. "Now," said he, "I will give a hundred crowns to that one of you who can break this bundle of sticks asunder." Each of them tried to the utmost of his strength, and each was obliged to confess that he could not break it. "And yet," said the father, "there is no difficulty

about it." He then untied the bundle, and broke one stick after the other with the greatest ease. Then he said, "As it is with these sticks, my sons, so it is with you. As long as you hold together, you are a match for all your enemies; but if you quarrel and separate, it will happen to you as to these sticks which you see lying broken on the ground."

THE GARDENER AND HIS ASS

A GARDENER, who was in the habit of going to market once a-week, loaded his ass so heavily with different kinds of vegetables that scarcely any part of him could be seen. Their road lay through a willow-bed, and the gardener cut some of the willows for binders, and placed them on the top of the ass's load, saying, "A little weight like this will not hurt you." A little farther on they came to a hazel-bush, and choosing a dozen slender wands to serve as flower-sticks, he placed them also on the animal's back, saying, "They are so light you will not be able to feel them." As they proceeded, the sun got very oppressive; and the gardener, finding his coat too warm, took it off, and threw it upon the rest of the load. "You will not flinch at the coat," said he, "seeing I can lift it with my little finger." But just then it happened that the ass stumbled against a stone and fell, and so great was his burden that he could not rise again.

/ THE HOUSE-DOG AND THE WOLF

ONE moonlit night a gaunt, hungry wolf fell into company with a well-fed house-dog by the side of a forest. After the usual polite inquiries as to each other's welfare and some general remarks on the weather, the wolf said, "How is it, my friend, that you look so comfortable and happy? I have to work, I am, certain, far harder for my livelihood than you, and yet it is with difficulty I can keep myself from starvation." "If you wish to fare as I fare," said the dog, "you must do as I do." "What do you mean?" asked the wolf. "Why," said the dog, "I keep guard over my master's house, and I have the best of meat, drink, and lodgings for my pains." "Well, then," said the wolf, "I shall be most happy to do the same; for I assure you that at present I have but a sorry time of it; and to have plenty of victuals and a good roof over my head, instead of my present hard lodging in the wood, where I am exposed to the rain and storm and cold, will be no bad bargain." "In that case," said the dog, "please to follow me." Now as they trotted on together the wolf espied a strange mark on the neck of the dog, and being somewhat of a curious nature, he inquired what had caused it. "Oh," said the dog, avoiding the question, "nothing at all." "Nay, but ——" persisted the wolf. "Well, if you must know," said the dog, "it is the mark of the chain." "Chain!" exclaimed the

wolf in surprise, "do you mean to tell me that at times you are chained up?" "Yes, during the day I am tied up; but at night I have perfect liberty. And then, my friend, I have such nice tit-bits from my master, and all the scraps from the servants; and I am such a favourite with everybody; they all fondle and caress me. . . . What is the matter now? Will you not come along with me?" asked the dog as he saw the wolf stealing off. "No, thank you," said the wolf, "you are welcome to all your dainties and all your caresses. I would not consent to be the greatest king in all the world on the terms you mention!" And away he trotted.

THE WOODMAN'S LUCK

ONCE a woodman went to a wood to fell trees. Just as he was laying the axe to the trunk of a great old oak, out jumped a *dryad*, who begged him to spare the tree. Moved more by fright than anything, he consented, and as a reward was promised his three next wishes should come true. At night, when he and his dame sat by the fire, the old woodman waxed hungry, and said aloud he wished for a link of hog's pudding. No sooner had he said it than a rustling was heard in the chimney, and down came a bunch of black-puddings and fell at the feet of the woodman, who, reminded of the *dryad* and the three

wishes, began to tell his wife about them. "Thou art a fool, Jan," said she, angry at his neglecting to make the best of his good luck; "I wish 'em were at thy nose!" Whereupon the black-puddings at once stuck there, so tight that the woodman, finding no force would remove them from this nose, was obliged to wish them off again. This was the last of his three wishes, and with it all the riches and gold-pieces they might have brought him flew up the chimney.

THE HOUND AND THE HARE

AFTER a long chase, a hound at length came up to a hare; but instead of at once putting an end to her life, the hound at one time licked the poor puss, and at another time bit her. The hare being sorely puzzled to know the reason of this conduct, said, "If you are a friend, why do you bite me? but if you are an enemy, why do you caress me?"

THE MILLER, HIS SON, AND HIS ASS

A MILLER and his son once drove an ass to a neighbouring market town in order to sell it. They had not gone far on their road before they were met by a number of girls, laughing and singing. As soon as they saw the father and son trudging after the ass,

they said one to the other, "Did you ever see such a couple of dull fellows to let the ass go idle in that manner when they might be riding?" The father, overhearing this remark, immediately desired his son to mount the ass, while he proceeded cheerfully by his side. After a while they came up to some old men, who seemed to be earnestly debating some important matter. When they saw the young man riding on the ass, and the old man patiently walking by his side, one of them exclaimed, "Do you see that young scapegrace riding while his old father walks by his side? Does not that prove what I have been saying? Is not that an instance of the respect shown to old age by the young of the present day? Get down, you young rogue, and let the old man take your place!" As soon as the son heard these words, he immediately jumped off the ass, and let his father get up. In this manner they went some distance further along a sandy road, when they were met by some peasant women. They immediately bawled out to the father, "You are a cruel old fellow to make yourself so comfortable on the ass, and to let your poor son toil through the deep sand. It is impossible for the lad to keep pace with you." The good-natured miller, wishing to oblige all parties, immediately desired his son to get up behind him. In this way they were drawing near the town when a shepherd, minding his sheep by the roadside, called out loudly, "Pray, my friend, does that ass belong to you?" "Yes," said the miller. "One would not



THEY WERE ACCOSTED BY A SHEPHERD MINDING HIS SHEEP
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have thought so by the unmerciful manner you have loaded him. Why, you two fellows are far better able to carry the poor animal than he you!" The father and son at once got down, and the son said to his father, "What now shall we do to satisfy the people? We must at last tie the ass's feet together and carry him on a pole on our shoulders to market." So they tied the ass's legs together, and by the help of a pole on their shoulders they endeavoured to carry him across a narrow bridge which led to the town. This was so novel a sight that the people left their shops and their houses to enjoy the fun; but the ass, patient as he is said to be, could not endure either his situation or the noise on all sides of him, so he commenced kicking away at the cords which bound him. He soon managed to burst them asunder; and tumbling off the pole he fell into the river, and being carried away by the tide he was drowned. Upon this the old man, annoyed at having tried in vain to please everybody, and vexed at the loss of his ass into the bargain, made the best of his way home again.

THE COURT OF THE LION

His majesty the lion determined to hold a meeting of his subjects at the palace, where lay the remains of many of his victims. The bear, unable to endure the smell, held his paw to his nose. For this conduct

the lion condemned him to instant death. The ape said that this punishment was just, praised the claws and teeth of his majesty, and vowed that the air of the royal palace was sweet and pleasant. The lion tore him in pieces for a flatterer. The fox next approached the royal throne. "Well," said the king, "and what do you say?" "I have got a severe cold," said the fox, "and cannot smell."

THE FOX AND THE MASK

A FOX by some means had gained an entrance into the house of an actor, and while rummaging over its contents had found a mask. After looking at it for some time he exclaimed, "What a fine-looking head! but what a pity it has no brains!"

THE SWALLOW AND OTHER BIRDS

A SWALLOW, observing a farmer sowing his field with flax, desired the other birds to assist her in picking the seed up and destroying it. She told them that flax was the material of which nets were made, and that if they allowed it to spring up many of them would be sure to be captured by its means. But the swallow's warning was not regarded, and the flax sprang up and appeared above the ground. Once

more did the swallow urge upon the birds the necessity of plucking up the flax before it grew stronger. But again were her warnings unheeded. At length the flax grew up into a high stalk, and again did the swallow desire them to attack it, as it was not yet too late. But the birds laughed at her fears and called her a silly prophet. The swallow, finding her warnings of no use, resolved to leave the society of such thoughtless, careless creatures. So, forsaking the woods and the company of the birds, she has ever since taken up her abode amongst the dwellings of men.

THE TWO TRAVELLERS AND THE OYSTER

Two weary travellers found on the sea-shore a fine fat oyster. Both looked at it with longing eyes, both pointed to it at the same moment, but the question was, which of them should have it. Loud and long was the dispute between them, but neither was disposed to yield to the other. At length they saw approaching them with solemn step a learned judge. "My Lord Judge," they both cried at once, "please to decide between us." With a grave face, the judge heard the arguments on each side. He then swallowed the oyster, and delivering to each of the travellers a shell, said, "Let each take his due. Depart in peace."

THE WOLF AND THE GOAT

As a goat was browsing on the top of a lofty rock, she was thus accosted by a wolf, who could not possibly get at her where she was: "Pray, come lower; I am much afraid that you will fall from that dizzy height; and, besides, you will find the grass down here much more pleasant and abundant." "I am much obliged to you for your kind invitation," said the goat, "but excuse me if I do not accept it, as I fancy that you are more concerned about your own dinner than about mine."

THE CAT AND THE FOX

As a cat and a fox were talking together about their friends and their foes, Reynard said, "I have little fear of my enemies, for I have a thousand tricks to deceive them; but, Mrs. Puss, if an enemy came, what would you do?" "I have but one shift," said the cat, "and if that is not successful I am undone." "I am very sorry for you," said the fox; "I should be very glad to impart to you some of my knowledge." At that moment a pack of hounds came in sight. The cat ran up a tree, whence she saw that the fox, with all his tricks, was unable to escape the dogs, who tore him to pieces.

THE GOOSE WITH THE GOLDEN EGGS

A CERTAIN man had a goose which laid him a golden egg every day. But not contented with this, the man thought that if he killed the goose he would be able to seize the treasure that was within her, and so become rich at once. So he laid the poor goose on his lap and cut her up, but to his great disappointment he found nothing!

THE WOLF AND THE HORSE

IN the spring-time, a hungry wolf came out of a forest into a meadow, where, to his great joy, he saw a horse quietly grazing. "Ah!" said he to himself; "you would make me an excellent meal. I wish you were a sheep, and then I should stand upon no ceremony, but with *you* I must be cautious what I am about." Approaching with a solemn step, he told the horse that he was a physician, that he had travelled in foreign parts, that he knew the virtues of all roots and herbs, that he was acquainted with all the diseases which afflict horses; and if his services could be of any use to him, he would be most happy to employ them. "For," said he, "I conclude you are not quite well, seeing you are put out to grass." "Yes, I have a bad swelling in my foot," said the

horse. "Then allow me immediately to apply a dressing to it," said the wolf. The horse, who had begun to suspect the self-styled physician, allowed him to come close to his hind-feet, when he sent forth such a kick as sent the wolf sprawling to some distance with jawbone broken and teeth knocked out.

THE MICE IN COUNCIL

ONCE upon a time the mice being much annoyed by the enmity of a cat, resolved to call a meeting to see whether any means could be devised of getting rid of their cruel foe. At this council many plans were proposed and rejected. At last a young mouse rose up and proposed that a bell should be hung round the cat's neck, so that they might have timely notice of her approach, and so escape the coming danger. This proposal was loudly applauded, and at once agreed to by all. Upon this a sage old mouse who had hitherto taken no part in the proceedings slowly rose, and, after silence had been gained, said, "The proposal which has just been made by my young friend is a very clever one, and I have no doubt it would prove successful. But," he went on, gazing round upon the assembled mice, "may I ask which one of you will bell the cat?" The mice looked in each other's faces, but no reply was given to the question.

THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE

As a hare was laughing at a tortoise for his slowness of pace and boasting of her superior swiftness, the tortoise said, "Let us run a race, and let the fox yonder be the umpire." The hare agreed to this, and it was decided that the race should take place there and then. Off they both started. The hare soon outran the tortoise, and began to treat the matter very lightly. "I feel," said she, "rather tired; I think I shall take a nap. If master tortoise does pass me, I shall soon overtake him." So she squatted herself on a tuft of fern, and fell fast asleep. In the meantime the tortoise jogged steadily along, passed the sleeping hare, and arrived first at the goal. The hare overslept herself, and when she did arrive at the end of the course, it was only to find that the tortoise had reached it long before her.

THE WOODPECKER AND THE DOVE

ONE afternoon a woodpecker and a dove were flying back together from a visit they had been paying to the peacock. "Well, how did the peacock please you to-day?" said the woodpecker; "was he not very disagreeable? And how proud he is! What can make him think so much of himself? Certainly it cannot be his feet; you must have noticed how ugly they are. Neither, I am sure, can it be his voice—how

harsh and grating that was! What do you think of him?" The dove answered, "Well! I must say I never thought of his feet or his voice; for whenever I see the peacock, I cannot help admiring his handsome head, his beautiful feathers, and his splendid tail."



THE WOLF AND THE PORCUPINE

ONE day a wolf by chance met a porcupine. "Brother," said the wolf, "you surprise me by being armed in this manner; we are not living in times of war, but of peace. Put aside your arms, you can take them again whenever you think fit." "Friend," replied the porcupine, "I do not intend to leave my arms: am not I in the company of a wolf?"

THE LION AND ASS HUNTING

ONE day a lion and an ass went out together to hunt. In the course of their travels they came to a cave inhabited by wild goats. It was agreed that the ass

should go in and frighten them, while the lion should station himself at the entrance of the cave and kill them as they came out. The ass accordingly went in, and began to kick and to bray and to make all kinds of noises. When the lion had killed as many as he wished, the ass came out and asked whether he had not done his part nobly. "Yes, indeed, you have," said the lion; "and you would have frightened me, too, had I not known you to be an ass."

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THE RAVEN AND THE SWAN

A RAVEN who was discontented with the blackness of his plumage, desired to become as white as the swan. For this purpose he left his former companions and resorts, and betook himself to the streams and lakes, where he was continually washing and dressing his coat. But all was of no use; his feathers remained as black as ever; and as he had deprived himself of his usual food, he soon sickened and died.

THE CAT AND THE RATS

A YOUNG mouse, with a smooth velvet skin, who was a great favourite with a rat, the master of a granary, was one day pounced upon by a cat. Squire

Nibble (this was the name of the rat) was inconsolable. "Accursed cat," said he, "you shall pay for this!" Immediately he consulted one of his fellows, an old rat of great courage and experience, who had boasted a hundred times that he feared neither cat nor trap. His advice was to summon forthwith all the wise rats of the republic of rats. The order was issued, and at the appointed day and hour they made their appearance. "Gentlemen," said the president, "a cat—the most wicked of cats—has devoured the favourite mouse of our friend Nibble; shall we permit such cruelty to pass unpunished? No! it shall not; my advice is, that we unite together against this base destroyer of our allies the mice. What is your opinion, gentlemen?" "To arms! To arms!" the deputies cried with one voice. "In this alone consists our safety." Immediately they armed themselves with lances (they were straws) and advanced in battle array; they were filled with fury and swore to conquer or to die. In the meantime the cat, with flashing eyes, advanced towards them. Nibble, thirsting for revenge, darted his lance at his enemy! Puss warded off the blow, soon routed her assailants, and after having made sad havoc amongst them, pursued them even to their holes.

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THE WOLVES AND THE SHEEP

FOR a long time there had been a deadly strife between the hungry wolves and the faithful dogs who were the guardians of the sheep. One day the wolves sent a private message to the sheep, saying that they would trouble them no longer if they would only send the dogs away. "Why," said they, "should there always be war between us? Why should we not all live together in peace and friendship? Those dogs which are constantly barking and biting at us are the sole cause of this continual warfare. Send them away and we will watch over and protect you." The silly sheep listened to these proposals, and dismissed the dogs. When they were thus deprived of their brave protectors, the wolves fell upon them and devoured them at their leisure.

THE CAT AND THE HEN

A HEN was once very sick, and confined to her nest. This having reached the ears of a cat, she resolved to pay the hen a visit and condole with her. When the hen saw who her visitor was she was greatly agitated. "Don't alarm yourself," said the cat, "keep up your spirits. I hope you will soon be abroad again. Can I do anything for you, or can I be of any

use to you? You may command my services." "I am much obliged to you," said the hen; "but if you will be so good as to leave me, I am sure I shall soon be better."

THE WOLF AND THE CRANE

A HUNGRY wolf was one day eating his dinner so fast that a bone stuck in his throat. He ran about entreating every animal to help him, and promising them a handsome reward. But for a long time he could find no one who liked him well enough. At last a crane came forward, and with her long bill drew out the bone. She then asked for her reward. "Do not you think it is enough," said the wolf, "that I allowed you to take your head out of my jaws? Be off directly, before I punish you for your insolence!"

THE WOLF AND THE GOAT

MOTHER GOAT was going one day to the meadow to fetch some new milk, and feeling very anxious lest any harm should happen to her kid during her absence, she told her on no account to let anyone in who could not give the pass-word, "Death to the

wolf and his race!" The wolf, who happened to be near, overheard these words, and laid them up in his memory. He lurked about till the old goat had gone away, and creeping softly to the door, he repeated in his softest and blandest tones the pass-word. But the cautious kid peeped through a crevice of the door and cried, "Show me first a pair of white paws, or I will not open the door." The wolf, much vexed at the failure of his plan, was obliged to march away.

THE MOUSE AND THE FROG

ONE day a mouse met a frog, and so well pleased were they with each other's company that they agreed to travel together. The frog, being anxious lest the mouse should run into danger, tied his own hind-leg to the fore-leg of the mouse. After travelling for some days in this manner on land, they came to some water. The frog began to swim across, bidding the mouse be of good courage. When they had got to the middle of the stream, the frog made a sudden plunge to the bottom—of course dragging the mouse after him. The poor mouse, in his endeavours to get above water again, made such a splashing and such a noise, that it reached the ears of a kite that was flying past. The kite, pouncing down, seized the mouse, bore him off, and carried the frog with him.

THE GOAT WITHOUT A BEARD

A GOAT, as vain as a goat can be, had a great desire to distinguish himself in the eyes of his own kin. He was in the habit of going to a clear fountain to admire his form. "I hate," said he one day, "this ugly beard,—it makes me look so old." He determined to have it taken off. With this object in view he placed himself in the hands of a monkey, who followed the calling of a barber. The monkey received him with the greatest politeness, made him sit down on a wooden chair, placed a towel under his chin, and shaved him. When he had finished, the monkey said, "Sir, I trust I may depend on your custom; you have never been so well shaved before; your face is as smooth as glass." The goat, proud of the praises of the monkey, left his seat, and ran off to the neighbouring hills. All the she-goats gathered round him, and said, "What is this? where is his beard!" "Why have you disfigured yourself in this manner?" said they to him. "How silly you are," answered the goat, "you know little of the world! Wherever we go, do not people mock us? Even the very children in the streets insult us, and seize us by the beard. Be advised by me—follow my example, and cease to be the objects of ridicule." "Brother," replied another goat, "you are foolish; if the teasing of the children can hurt your pride, how will you stand the laughter of all our flock?"

THE DOG, THE COCK, AND THE FOX

A DOG and a cock who were great friends agreed to travel together. One night they found themselves in a forest, and while the cock took up his lodgment among the branches of a tree, the dog slept soundly at the foot. The night passed away and as soon as daylight dawned, the cock, as his custom was, sent forth a shrill crowing. A fox, who was near, heard him, and hoping to make a meal of him, came to the tree, and thus addressed the cock: "Thou art a useful bird; thou tellest man that the darkness of night has passed, and callest him to his daily labours. I am delighted to have met thee. Come down from the tree, and let us rejoice and sing our morning hymn together." The cock answered, "Go to the other side of the tree and ask the sacristan to toll the bell." The fox went to call him, when the dog jumped up, seized the fox and killed him.

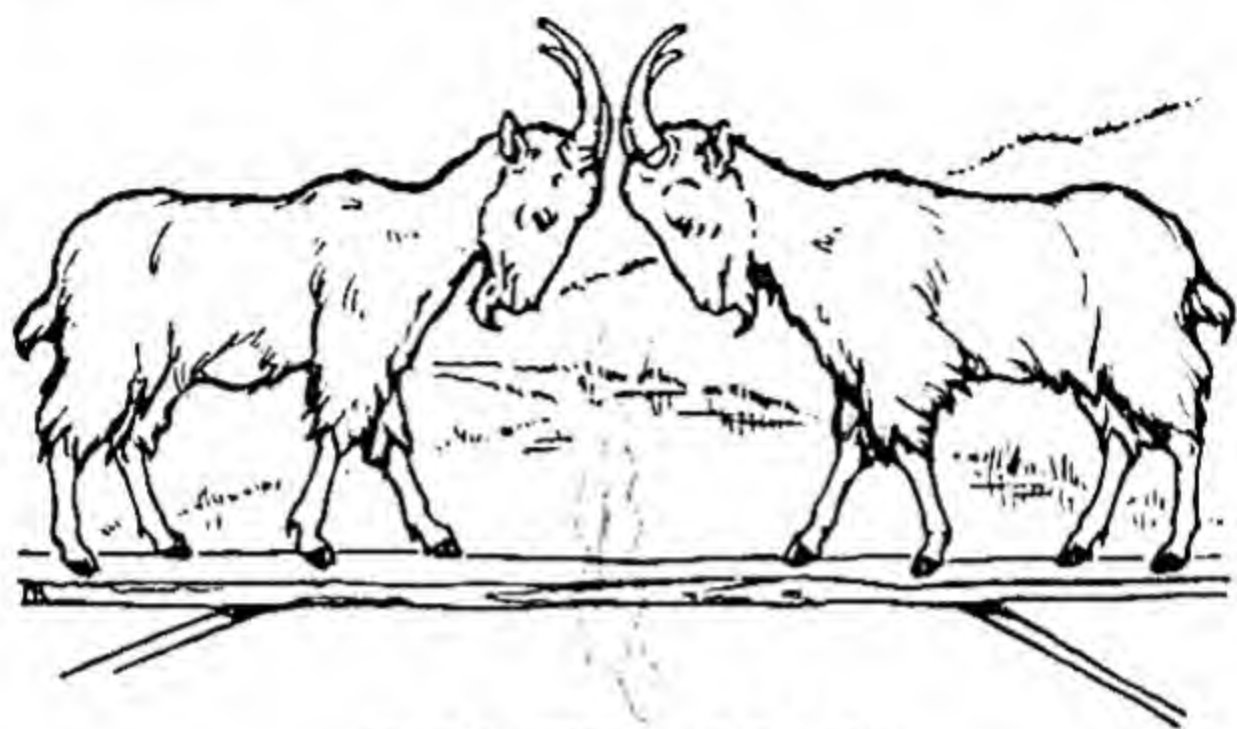
THE WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

A WOLF, having clothed himself in the skin of a sheep which he had killed, contrived to get among the flock and devour a great number of them. The shepherd for some time was not able to account for the loss

of so many of his sheep. One night, the wolf as usual having been shut up with the sheep, the shepherd wanted something for his master's supper, and going to the fold to fetch out a sheep, mistook the wolf for one of them, and killed him upon the spot.

THE FARMER AND THE SHOE-NAIL

ONE day a farmer saddled his horse to go to a neighbouring market; and though he saw that a nail was wanting in one of the horse's shoes, he said, "It is only one nail, I need not trouble myself about that," and rode off. When he was about half-way on his journey the horse cast his shoe. The farmer said, "If there were a forge near, I should have that shoe put on again; but still he has got three good shoes, and I daresay he will do very well." But the ground was full of sharp flint-stones, and soon the horse began to go lame. Suddenly two robbers sprang out of the wood on the farmer. He dug his spurs into the horse's sides, but the poor animal was not able to run away, and so the robbers took from the farmer all his money and his horse as well.



THE TWO GOATS

Two goats, after having browsed in the meadows, went to seek what they could find on the mountains. After some time it happened that they found themselves opposite to each other, with a brook running between them. Across this a plank was laid, but so narrow was it that even two weasels would have had some difficulty in going over abreast. In spite of the danger, the two goats resolved to pass over. They both placed their feet on the plank; they advanced; they met in the middle of the bridge, and as neither of them would retreat, they knocked each other over into the water and both were drowned.

THE COUNTRYMAN AND THE SNAKE

ONE cold frosty winter morning a countryman happened to see under a hedge a snake almost dead with cold. Having pity on it, he placed it in his

bosom, brought it home, and laid it by the fire. The warmth soon restored it; but the first use it made of its regained strength was to erect and fly at the wife and children of its preserver. Upon this the countryman seized a mattock and laid the reptile dead at his feet.

THE FOX AND THE HEN

A HUNGRY fox, while searching for something to satisfy his hunger, spied a hen scratching up the earth and picking up worms at the foot of a tree. Upon the tree there hung a drum, which made a noise whenever the wind caused the branches to beat upon it. The fox was just about to seize the hen when he heard the noise of the drum. "Oh, ho!" said the fox, "are you there? I will be with you soon. Surely that round body, whatever it may be, must have more flesh upon it than a lean hen." So saying, he clambered up the tree, and in the meanwhile the hen made her escape. The famished fox, having seized his prey, fell to with teeth and claws upon it. But when he had torn off the head of the drum and found only empty space, he fetched a deep sigh and said, "Unfortunate wretch that I am! what a delicate morsel I have lost for the sake of a box of emptiness."

THE HERON

A HERON with his thin legs and long bill was stalking along the bank of a river in a very thoughtful mood. The sun was shining brightly, the stream was murmuring along as clear as crystal, and the carp and the pike were springing merrily to the surface. The heron might have easily snapped them up, but he preferred waiting till he had a better appetite. "It is not my hour for dinner, I always like to dine at the same time." Soon, however, he felt hungry; he looked about for some fish, but could find none except some tench. "Tench," said he, "does not suit my taste; I would rather go without my dinner than eat tench!" He went on and he saw some gudgeon: "Gudgeon," said he, "are poor eating for such as I; they are hardly worth opening one's mouth for." Thus he let fish after fish swim by, till there were no more to be seen. By this time he had grown hungrier than ever, and at last he was obliged to consider himself lucky in procuring a few small snails.

THE LION AND THE RABBIT

A FIERCE lion and several other wild beasts dwelt in a delightful meadow. The lion was the dread of all by reason of his strength and the frightful ravages

he made amongst them. One day the wild beasts waited upon him and laid their case before him; they said that they were his subjects, and that it was not right in him to make every day such dreadful slaughter amongst them. They desired that he should live at peace with them, and they promised that they would every morning bring him sufficient food, so that there would be no occasion for him to hunt any more. The lion readily fell in with this proposal; and the beasts cast lots every morning, and he upon whom the lot fell was appointed to hunt for the lion. One day the lot fell upon the rabbit, who, being at a loss to perform the duty which had fallen upon him, summoned the beasts together and said, "What a miserable life we lead! We must either be eaten ourselves, or we must spend our strength in feeding our lord and king. Now, if you will stand by me, I promise you that I shall get rid of this cruel tyrant." They all promised to assist him to the utmost of their power. Upon this the rabbit stayed in his hole till the hour of dinner was long past, and made no provision for the lion. Now the lion was getting every instant more hungry and angry. At length perceiving the rabbit coming towards him, he said, "What are my subjects about? Where is my dinner? Be assured that if I have to wait much longer, I shall make them suffer for it." The rabbit, bowing to him with profound respect, replied, "May it please your majesty, your subjects have not been wanting in their duty; I was sent by them to bring

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your usual provision, but I met a lion by the way; and though I told him it was for your majesty, he took it from me, saying that he alone was king here." The lion, on hearing this, was furious with rage. "Who and where is he that dares usurp my rights? Canst thou show me where this traitor lives?" "Yes," replied the rabbit, "if your majesty will be pleased to follow me." The lion, breathing revenge and destruction, followed the rabbit. When they came to a well of clear water, the rabbit said, "Your enemy lives in this well; if you will be pleased to look in you will see him." So the lion went stalking up to the well, and seeing the reflection of himself, which he took to be the lion that had stolen his food, he flung himself into the water and was drowned.

THE KING AND THE SHEPHERD-BOY

ONE bright spring morning, a shepherd-boy was tending his sheep in a lovely valley; and being a light-hearted, happy boy, he leaped and sang for joy. Now it happened that the king of that country was hunting there, and seeing the shepherd-boy dancing so merrily, he said to him, "What makes you so happy, my little fellow?" The boy who did not know that he was speaking to the king, replied, "Why should I not be happy? The king himself is not richer than I am." "How is that?" inquired the

king; "tell me how much you have." "The bright sun in the blue sky shines for me as well as for the king," went on the boy, "and the woods, and the hills, and the valleys, look to me as green and as lovely as to him. My two hands I would not part with for any amount of money; and all the pearls in the king's treasury would not buy my two eyes. Besides all this, I have good health, and I do not want anything more than I have. I have enough food; my dress is all I want for my calling; and I receive as much money every year as pays me for my work and trouble. And do you think, sir," he finished, "that the king has more?" The king laughed and said, "I am the king. What you have said is quite right: you are as rich as I. May you ever preserve your present happy spirit!"

THE FOX AND THE STORK

A FOX one day invited a stork to dinner, and desiring to amuse himself at the expense of his guest, he prepared nothing but some soup in a wide, shallow dish. This the fox could lap up with the greatest ease, but the poor stork, with his long, narrow bill, could not manage to get even a single mouthful. The fox pretended to be very sorry to see the stork eat so sparingly, and was afraid that the soup was not seasoned to his taste. The stork did not make any

complaint, but requested the honour of the fox's company to dinner on the following day. The fox arrived at the appointed hour, when the stork having ordered dinner to be brought in, it was served up in a jar, the neck of which was so deep and narrow that though the stork could readily thrust in her long bill, the fox, though very hungry, was obliged to content himself with licking the outside. At first the fox was very much vexed, but on departing, he owned that he had no reason to complain of the treatment he had received, seeing he had set the example.

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THE COUNTRY MOUSE AND THE TOWN MOUSE

ONCE upon a time a country mouse invited an old friend who resided in town to pay a visit to his rural home. The invitation was accepted, and the country mouse exerted himself to the utmost to make the visit of his friend agreeable. He brought forth from his larder all his tit-bits and dainties—peas and bacon, oatmeal and cheese-parings, and for a dessert some nuts and a nice mellow apple. Out of regard to the feelings of his host, the town mouse condescended to taste a piece here and a piece there. At length he said, "My dear friend, how do you contrive to live in such an out-of-the-way place as this? I wonder you are not moped to death. How

can you exist with naught but woods and fields, and rocks and streams around you? Can you prefer the chirping of birds and the lowing of cattle to the conversation of polished life? Why, you are quite wasting your days here. We shall not, you know, live for ever. Therefore let us enjoy ourselves as much as we can. Come with me to town, and I will show you what life is." The poor country mouse felt quite overpowered by the winning ways and polished manners of his friend, and consented to accompany him to his house in town. It was about midnight when the two friends reached their quarters. It was a large house in the most fashionable part of the town. The furniture was splendid; the walls were adorned with pictures by the greatest painters; and articles of the rarest art and richest value were scattered everywhere about. On the tables were the remains of a splendid banquet which had that day been given. The town mouse, in his turn, exerted himself to the utmost to entertain his friend. He placed him upon a splendid Persian carpet, and pressed upon him all the dainties that he thought would please his palate. The country mouse could not help thinking what a change all this was from his humble home and his simple fare, and was quietly yielding himself to the enjoyment of the hour, when, suddenly, some persons burst into the room where the two friends were sitting. As quick as thought they scampered off to a hole in the corner of the room, and remained there, their little hearts

beating with fear till the intruders had departed. They had scarcely crept out of their hole when the loud barking of dogs caused them to run back again in even greater terror than before. This was too much for the nerves of the country mouse, so when quiet was once more restored, he came out of his hole, and bidding his city friend good-bye, said, "This life may suit you, my dear friend, and I hope you may enjoy yourself here; but give me my homely fare and my quiet home before all the luxuries you have."

THE ANT AND THE GRASSHOPPER

ALL through the long warm days of summer the grasshopper played among the grasses of the field. He sang to the working bees, cheering their laden flight. Near by an ant worked unceasingly. She held no converse with the bees, nor listened to the song of the grasshopper. Always she worked, storing food.

Now summer drew on to autumn, and autumn slipped into winter. There was no grass in the fields, and the trees were bare. The grasshopper shivered in the cold wind, and vainly sought food. At last, hungry and desolate, he presented himself at the ant's house, and begged for food and shelter.

"What did you do in the summer days?" said the ant. "Did you store no food?" "None," said the

grasshopper; "but I sang to the bees." "Sang!" said the ant. "Go now, then, and dance; that will keep you warm." And, laughing, she drove the grasshopper from her door.

THE LION AND OTHER BEASTS HUNTING

THE lion and several other beasts entered into an agreement to share whatever they caught in hunting. The first day they went out together a fat stag was taken, which was divided into three parts. The lion, declaring that he would share out the booty, laid his paw on one of the portions, and thus spoke: "This first piece I claim as being your lord and king; this second I also claim as being the bravest and most courageous among you; and as for the third," exclaimed he, glaring fiercely round on the assembled beasts, "I intend to take that likewise, and let me see which of you dare hinder me."

THE MONKEY AND THE CAT

A MONKEY and a cat, who had been always brought up together, were great friends. They were very mischievous; they cared nothing for a beating, and were always vieing with each other in stealing and other sad pranks. One day, while sitting by the

fireside, they saw some chestnuts roasting. The monkey had a great desire to eat some of them; but he was sorely puzzled how he was to get them. The servant having left the room, he said to puss, "I know you are very clever and are acquainted with a variety of tricks. I wish you would oblige me now by helping me." "With all my heart," said puss, "what is it you want?" "I only wish you to get me some of these chestnuts out of the fire, for my hands do not happen to be fireproof," answered the monkey. Whereupon the cat, who felt herself highly flattered, removed with her paw some of the cinders carefully, and after a little trouble managed to dislodge one of the chestnuts, then two, and then three, which were all instantly devoured by the monkey, without leaving his companion a single one. While thus engaged, the servant returned and caught puss in the very act. "Wretched cat!" said she, "it is you then that eat my chestnuts!" and so saying she took up a broom and drove them out of the room—the monkey with his stomach full, the cat with hers empty.

THE COUNTRYMAID AND THE MILK-PAIL

A MILKWOMAN, with a can of milk on her head, was walking along merrily to market, when she fell into the following train of thought: "I have eight pints of milk which at three half-pence the pint will bring

me one shilling. With this I shall buy a hen; the hen will give me eggs; the eggs will become chickens; it will be easy to rear them in the little yard behind our house. I shall take the chickens to market when poultry is dear, and I am sure to have money enough to buy a calf. The calf will grow into a cow, and then I will sell her for—oh! how much!” and she jumped with joy at the thought. Down fell the milk-pail to the ground! and cow, calf, hen, chickens and eggs all vanished together.

THE LION AND THE SLAVE

A POOR slave, who had run away from his master, had been taken again, and condemned to die. He was led out into a large open space, and a fierce and hungry lion was let loose upon him. Thousands of people were seated round looking at the spectacle. The lion rushed upon the poor trembling slave, but when he came near, he suddenly stopped, wagged his tail, leaped around him full of joy, and licked his hands. The people astonished at this conduct on the part of the lion, asked the slave the cause of it. The slave said, “When I ran away from my master, I sought refuge in a cave in the desert, and one day this lion came to me limping as if in great pain. I saw that there was a sharp thorn sticking in his paw. I drew the thorn out, and after that when the lion

went out hunting, he always brought me part of the spoil. And for some time we lived peaceably in the cave. One day when hunting together we were separated, and I was taken prisoner by some soldiers. The lion also must have been captured; and now, as you see, he is overjoyed to see me again." When the people heard this wonderful tale they were so pleased at the gratitude of the lion, that they with one voice cried out, "Let this man live!" The slave was at once released and richly rewarded; and the lion always accompanied him from that time forward as tame as any dog.

THE TRAVELLERS AND THE CHAMELEON

Two travellers, who had visited Arabia, were talking about the chameleon.

"A very strange animal," said one, "I never saw another at all like it in my life. It has the head of a fish, its body is that of a lizard, its pace is slow, its colour blue——"

"Stop there!" said the other; "you are quite mistaken; the animal is green: I saw it with my two eyes." "I saw it as well as you," cried the first; "and I am certain that it is blue." "I am positive that it is green!" "And I that it is blue!" Our travellers were getting very angry with each other and were about to settle the disputed point by

blows, when, happily, a third person arrived. "Well, gentlemen, what is the matter here? Calm yourselves, I pray you." "Will you be the judge of our quarrel." "Yes, what is it?" "This person maintains that the chameleon is green, while I say that it is blue!" "My dear sirs, you are both in the wrong; the animal is neither the one nor the other—it is black." "Black! you must be jesting." "Not at all, I assure you; I have one with me in a box, and you shall judge for yourselves." "The box was produced and opened, when to the surprise of all, the animal was as yellow as gold!

THE LION AND THE FLY

"OUT of my sight, vile insect!" roared a lion to a buzzing gad-fly, "and trouble not your king when he would rest from the cares of state." "What!" cried the fly, "am I so contemptible in your sight? Do you think I am afraid of you? I defy you to mortal combat! Quick! defend yourself!" The lion, finding that the insect would not be brushed away, was obliged to accept the challenge; so to battle they went. The lion had no chance against his more nimble opponent, for the fly, flying round and round, seized a favourable moment, and stung him sharply on the neck. The lion, foaming with pain, and his eyes flashing with rage, roared so terribly that all his subjects crept in silence to their caves and dens.

The little fly had not overrated his powers; he continued to sting his enemy in the eye, and nose, and lip, till the lion was almost mad with the pain. He tore himself with his claws in his fury, he lashed his sides and beat the air with his tail, and at length, quite worn out, he sank on the ground. Away flew the victorious fly humming songs of triumph and spreading far and wide the news of his achievements. And then, alas! he, the conqueror, had the misfortune to get entangled in a cobweb, where he was speedily dispatched by his old enemy the spider.

THE GIANT AND THE DWARF

ONCE upon a time a giant and a dwarf were friends and kept together. They made a bargain that they would never forsake each other, but go and seek adventures. The first battle they fought was with two Saracens. The dwarf, who was very courageous, dealt one of the Saracens an angry blow. It did very little injury to the Saracen, who, lifting up his sword, fairly struck off the poor dwarf's arm. He was now in a woeful plight; but the giant coming to his assistance, in a short time left the two Saracens dead on the plain, and the dwarf cut off his dead enemy's head out of spite. They then travelled on to another adventure. This was against three fierce and cruel ogres, who were carrying away a damsel in distress.

The dwarf was not quite so fierce now as before; but for all that struck the first blow, which was returned by another that knocked out his eye. But the dwarf's friend was soon up with them, and had they not fled would certainly have killed them every one. They were all very joyful for this victory, and the damsel whom they had rescued fell in love with the giant, and married him. They now travelled on and on and on till they met a company of robbers. The giant for the first time was foremost now, but the dwarf was not far behind. The battle was stout and long. Wherever the giant came, all fell before him; but the dwarf had like to have been killed more than once. At last victory was to the two friends; but the dwarf lost his leg. The dwarf had now lost an arm, a leg, and an eye, while the giant was without a single wound. Upon which, he cried out to his companion, "My little hero, this is a glorious sport! let us get one victory more, and then we shall have honour for ever." "No," cried the dwarf, who was by this time grown wiser, "no, I declare off; I'll fight no more: for I find in every battle that you get all the honour and rewards, but all the blows fall on me."

THE WOLF AND THE LION

As a wolf was taking to his den a lamb which he had stolen from a neighbouring fold he was met by a fierce lion. The wolf as soon as he caught sight of the

royal beast dropped his prize, and scampered off to a safe distance. The lion at once seized the lamb and bore it away. The wolf then bawled out to him not to take what did not belong to him, and that it was a great shame thus to rob him of his property. The lion answered with a smile, "I suppose, then, that your friend the shepherd has been making you a present."

THE PORCUPINE AND THE SNAKES

A PORCUPINE, in search of shelter, begged of some snakes to admit him into their cave. This they agreed to do; but they were so annoyed with their companion's prickly quills, that they soon desired him to leave their hole. "No," said the porcupine, "let those go away who do not like the place; for my part, I am quite satisfied."

THE ANTS AND THE FLIES

ONE bright summer day, a father and son were in a beautiful flower-garden; the boy—as is the habit of little boys—was running about here, there, and everywhere. At length his father saw that his attention was fixed on something at the farther end of the garden. Presently the boy called to his father to

come to him. When his father reached the spot where his son was standing, he saw that he was observing some ants who on that sunny day were storing their winter provision. "Father," said the boy, "what silly little creatures these ants are! Look at them toiling and broiling on this summer day! Why don't they run about and enjoy themselves in the merry sunshine like those happy flies?" The father made no answer at that time to the question of his son. Summer passed away, with its joy and gladness. Autumn, with its ripening grain, also passed away. The winter came, with its cold frost and biting blast. The father and the son were again in the garden. But how changed it seemed from that bright summer day! The father took his son by the hand and led him to that part where he had noticed the ants at their work. He removed a tuft of grass and showed him that the ants were all alive and in motion. He then pointed to the dead bodies of the flies that lay scattered about and said, "Had those flies employed their time in summer as usefully as these ants, they, too, might have been like them happy and well. Little son," he went on, "employ your youth, the summer of life, in so useful a manner that when you reach the winter of old age you may not have to look back upon a misspent life."

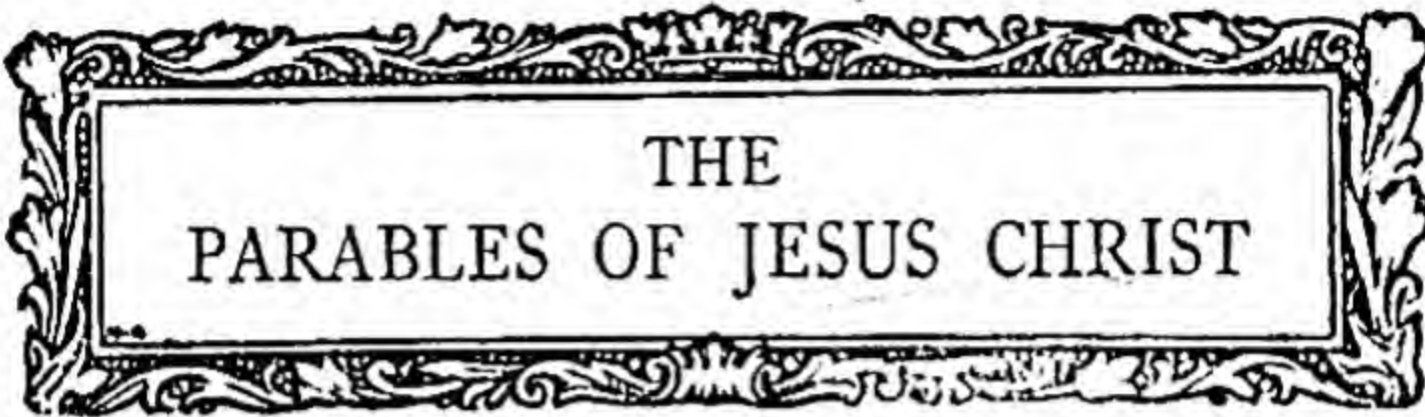
THE RICH AND THE POOR BOY

Two boys—the one the son of rich, the other the son of poor parents—were standing on the sea-shore. Suddenly some pirates sprang out of the bushes around and dragged them aboard their vessel with the intention of selling them for slaves. A storm having arisen, the ship was driven out of its course and wrecked, and with the exception of the two boys, all on board were lost. The boys escaped to a desolate island inhabited by some cruel Moors. Now the rich boy, when he was at home, knowing that he had plenty of money had learned nothing; but the poor boy had been very useful to his father in making baskets. The lad now thought that his knowledge might be turned to some account. So having cut some willow-twigs, he began to make a little basket. While he was thus engaged, the savages gathered round him, watching his fingers. When he had finished the basket, he presented it to the person who appeared to be their chief. Then all the rest, men and women, desired also to have baskets made for them. So they prepared a hut for the lad under a wide-spreading tree, that he might proceed with his work in comfort. They also promised to supply him with plenty of food. The next day the savages, seeing that the other boy was idle, desired that he too, should make baskets. But when they found that he was not able, they beat him, and would have taken

away his life had not the little basket-maker begged them to spare him. They then ordered him to strip off his beautiful velvet jacket, to put on the other boy's rough garb, to wait upon him, and to carry willow-twigs for him.

THE HART AND THE VINE

A HART pursued by some hunters found a shelter among the leaves of a vine. The foliage was so thick that when the hunters came up they did not observe him. They were on the point of going away when the hart, thinking that the danger was over, commenced eating the leaves of the vine. But one of the hunters, hearing a rustling sound, turned round and spying the hart, shot at him and wounded him to death. When he was dying he said, "This is a just punishment for my ingratitude. Why could I not have left alone those leaves which would have protected me in the hour of danger?"



THE PARABLES OF JESUS CHRIST

You will see, when you come to the questions at the end of the book, that I have asked you to write Fables of your own. And you will then notice that I have not asked you to write a Parable. The Parables, as I have said at the beginning of the book, are written in words so beautiful that no one may hope to equal them. But it is not for this reason alone that I have not asked you to write a Parable, but simply because not you nor I, nor the wisest man in the world could write a true Parable. The Parables are the wisdom of Jesus: the lessons, the comforting and heartening words of God; and as such they contain a beauty, a strength and a simplicity which is beyond the wisdom of men.

But, perhaps you will say, *Æsop* and *La Fontaine* were wise, and in reading their Fables we have found out for ourselves the lessons they wished to teach. That is true; but I am sure that if you have been clever enough to do this, you have also seen the great difference there is between the Fables and the Parables.

Perhaps, however, you find it very difficult to put into words just what this difference is. I, too, find it equally hard: but let us see if we can help one another to make it clear.

The Fables teach us many lessons, but they are the lessons of everyday life; the things we should or should not do in dealing with all the folks we meet about our daily work and play. They are, indeed, little rules of conduct which we must keep, if we would make our everyday life happy and pleasant both for ourselves and for others; they are like the little drops of oil which make the great wheels of mighty engines run smoothly.

But in life there is something more than the little things of every day, more than work and play, than buying and selling, than laughter and tears, than quarrelling and making friends again. There is beauty: the beauty and wonder of flowers, and the splendour of the starry sky. There is sacrifice and service; and there is worship and the thoughts of God and the world to come. And it is about these great things that the Parables teach us.

And so in this little book we may say that we have the little things of our common everyday lives—the Fables; and the great and splendid things of the spirit—the Parables. And because they are together in one book it may well be that each will serve to show the especial beauty of the other; to form, as we say, a contrast or foil. A daisy and the sun are both beautiful, but the difference between them is too great for words; and yet, when the sun shines out upon the daisy each seems a little more beautiful because of the other.

THE TALENTS

A MAN going into another country called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his several ability; and he went on his journey. Straightway he that received the five talents went and traded with them, and made other five talents. In like manner he also that received the two gained other two. But he that received the one went away and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. Now after a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and maketh a reckoning with them. And he that received the five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: lo, I have gained other five talents. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. And he also that received the two talents came and said, Lord thou deliveredst unto me two talents: lo, I have gained other two talents. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. And he also that had received the one

talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering where thou didst not scatter: and I was afraid, and went away and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, thou hast thine own. But his lord answered him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I did not scatter; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back mine own with interest. Take ye away therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him that hath the ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away. And cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

THE SHEEPFOLD AND THE GOOD SHEPHERD

VERILY, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. When he hath



"I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD"

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put forth all his own, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. This parable spake Jesus unto them; but they understood not what things they were which He spake unto them.

Jesus therefore said unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and go out, and shall find pasture. The thief cometh not, but that he may steal, and kill, and destroy: I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep. He that is a hireling, and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, beholdeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf snatcheth them, and scattereth them; he fleeth because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know me, even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd. Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down

of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment received I from my Father.

THE LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD

FOR the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing in the market-place idle; and to them he said, Go ye also in the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing; and he saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard. And when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and pay them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. And when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And

when they received it, they murmured against the householder, saying, These last have spent but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat. But he answered and said to one of them, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take up that which is thine, and go thy way; it is my will to give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Or is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last.

THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN

AND he began to speak unto the people this parable: A man planted a vineyard, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into another country for a long time. And at the season he sent unto the husbandmen a servant, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty. And he sent yet another servant: and him also they beat, and handled him shamefully, and sent him away empty. And he sent yet a third: and him also they wounded and cast him forth. And the lord of the vineyard said, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him. But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned one with another, saying, This is the heir:

let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. And they cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do unto them? He will come and destroy these husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.

THE TRUE VINE

I AM the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit. Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered.

THE PRODIGAL SON

AND he said, A certain man had two sons:

And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet;

And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry:

For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing.

And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

And he was angry, and would not go in; therefore came his father out, and entreated him.

And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

THE OLD GARMENT

AND he spake also a parable unto them: No man rendeth a piece from a new garment and putteth it upon an old garment; else he will rend the new, and also the piece from the new will not agree with the old. And no man putteth new wine into old wine-skins; else the new wine will burst the skins, and itself will be spilled, and the skins will perish. But new wine must be put into fresh wine-skins. And no man having drunk old wine desireth new: for he saith, The old is good.

THE TWO SONS

A MAN had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in the vineyard. And he answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented himself, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Whether of the twain did the will of his father?

THE LOST SHEEP
AND THE LOST PIECE OF SILVER

AND he spake unto them this parable, saying, What man of you having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in

the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and his neighbours, and saith unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. Or what woman having a piece of silver, doth hide it under a bush, or hideth it under a lamp, and searcheth not diligently until she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth together her friends and neighbours, and saith, Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost. Even so, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one that repenteth.

THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT

FOR the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would make a reckoning with his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But as much as he had not wherewith to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out,



"LIGHT A LAMP AND SEEK DILIGENTLY UNTIL SHE
FIND IT"

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and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him a hundred pence: and he laid hold of him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest. So his fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was due. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were exceeding sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him unto him, and saith unto him, Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou besoughtest me: shouldest not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

THE kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in the field; which a man found and hid; and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls: and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every

kind: which, when it was filled, they drew up on the beach; and they sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but the bad they cast away.

THE TARES

ANOTHER parable set he before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man that sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away. But when the blade sprang up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. And the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? whence then hath it tares? And he said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he saith, Nay; lest haply while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat with them. Let them both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

THE UNRIGHTEOUS JUDGE

AND he spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint; saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God,

and regarded not man: and there was a widow in that city: and she came oft unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard any man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest she wear me out by her continual coming.

THE UNJUST STEWARD

AND he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?

And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

Then he said to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill and write fourscore.

And the lord commended the unjust steward because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

THE GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED AND THE LEAVEN

HE said therefore, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I liken it? It is like unto

a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his own garden; and it grew, and became a tree; and the birds of the heaven lodged in the branches thereof. And again he said, Where-

unto shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened.



THE TWO DEBTORS

MASTER, say on. A certain lender had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. When they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him most?

THE LAMP

AND no man, when he hath lighted a lamp, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but putteth it on a stand, that they which enter in may see the light. For nothing is hid, that shall not be made manifest; nor anything secret, that shall not be known and come to light.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

A CERTAIN man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. And he fell among robbers, which both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance a certain priest was going down that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And in like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan,

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as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion, and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee. Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbour unto him that fell among the robbers? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

THE SOWER

AND he taught them many things in parables, and said unto them in his teaching, Hearken: Behold, the sower went forth to sow: and it came to pass, as he sowed, some seed fell by the way side, and the birds came and devoured it. And other fell on the rocky ground, where it had not much earth; and straightway it sprang up, because it had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And other fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And other fell into the good ground, and

yielded fruit, growing up and increasing; and brought forth, thirtyfold, and sixtyfold, and a hundredfold. And he said, Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

THE GUESTS BIDDEN TO A FEAST

A CERTAIN man made a great supper; and he bade many: and he sent forth his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a field, and I must needs go out and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. And the servant came and told his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets, and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and maimed and blind and lame. And the servant said, Lord, what thou didst command is done, and yet there is room. And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and constrain them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

THE STRAYED OX

AND behold, there was before him a certain man which had the dropsy. And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not? But they held their peace. And he took him and healed him, and let him go. And he said unto them, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a well, and will not straightway draw him up on a Sabbath day? And they could not answer again unto these things.

THE FEAST

AND he spake a parable unto those which were bidden, when he remarked how they chose out the chief seats; saying unto them, When thou art bidden of any man to a marriage feast, sit not down in the chief seat; lest haply a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him, and he that bade thee and him shall come and say to thee, Give this man place; and then thou shalt begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest place; that when he that hath bidden thee cometh, he may say to thee, Friend, go up higher: then thou shalt have glory in the presence of all that sit at meat with thee. For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

THE RICH MAN

AND he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my corn and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

THE TWO BUILDERS

AND why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Every one that cometh unto me, and heareth my words, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who digged and went deep, and laid a foundation upon the rock: and when a flood arose, the stream brake against that house, and could not shake it: because it had been well builded. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that

built a house upon the earth without a foundation; against which the stream brake, and straightway it fell in; and the ruin of that house was great.

THE WATCHFUL SERVANTS

LET your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning; and be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their lord, when he shall return from the marriage feast; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may straightway open unto him. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and shall come and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, and if in the third, and find them so, blessed are those servants. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what hour the thief was coming, he would have watched, and not have left his house to be broken through. Be ye also ready.

THE TEN VIRGINS

THEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.

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A NOTE BY THE EDITOR

DR. JOHNSON defined the fable or apologue as "a narrative in which irrational and sometimes inanimate beings are, for purposes of moral instruction, feigned to speak and act with human interests and passions."

The fable is probably the earliest form of literary expression, and its history goes back to remote antiquity. It seems reasonable to assume that it had its origin in the universal impulse of mankind to express its thoughts in concrete images. If it be not the most primitive form of literature, it is certainly the most widely diffused, and this one fact alone should lend weight to the assumption that in the fable we have the small distant spring from which has come the great river of modern literature.

It is undoubtedly anterior to the myth and legend, and differs in kind from these, inasmuch as the myth and legend are things of slow and gradual growth, while the fable is a spontaneous invention. The literary myth, e.g. the legend of Pandora in Hesiod, is strictly speaking an allegory, it is self-interpreting and the story and moral are intermingled throughout. This gives a very definite line of demarcation between myth and fable, for in the fable the story and the moral are distinct parts: La Fontaine himself defining

the story as the body and the moral as the soul. It must be remembered, however, that the earliest fables had no moral,¹ and the primitive beast fable told a little story purely and simply for its own sake, and was as innocent of moral as the fairy-stories of Little Red Riding Hood and Jack and the Bean-Stalk. The transition to the moral was of course an easy stage.

The East, the land of myth and legend, is the natural home of the fable, and certainly Hindustan was the birthplace of the oldest form in which fables still exist.

From India the fable passed to Western Europe by means of ancient Persian, Arabic, Greek and Latin; and by the end of the sixteenth century there were Italian, French and English versions.

It cannot be doubted that Sanskrit fables from Hindustan had reached Greece—by way of China, Thibet and Persia—as early as the eighth century B.C.; many fables passing under the name of Æsop are identical with those of the East.

No clear distinction can be drawn between the fable and the parable, and the two are blood-brothers of the metaphor. Neander, however, points out that in the fable human passions and actions are attributed

¹ In passing, it may be said that in the fables included in this little book, the morals have been omitted, because it was thought that in the few instances where they are not obvious, the task of supplying them would make a pleasant exercise for the children for whom the book is intended.

to beasts, while in the parable the lower creation is only employed to illustrate the higher life, and never transgresses the natural laws of its kind.

Further, there is a close affinity between the fable and the proverb. The proverb is often enough a condensed or fossilised fable, and many fables are merely expanded and elaborated proverbs. If it be borne in mind that folk-lore is generally divided into three main heads: (a) Belief and Custom, (b) Narratives and Sayings, and (c) Art, it will be seen that folk-lore has a legitimate claim to at least some slight kinship with the fable. Indeed a relationship might quite fairly be claimed also for the ballad, springing as it did, from the lips and hearts of the old peoples of the world.

The characteristic of the early fable, which we may for convenience group as the *Æsopian*, was an artless simplicity. They were easy and transparent, affecting no graces of style, and indeed rendered the moral supererogatory.

Coming to later times, some of the fables in Greek prose by the rhetorician Aphthonius (A.D. 400), and in Latin elegiac verse by Avianus, were used for centuries as a text-book in the schools, and may serve as a link between the ancient and mediæval fable. In a Latin dress, prose and verse, the fable helped to make up a mass of stories which has been bequeathed to us by the monastic libraries. They served many purposes: they were easier and safer for children (adult and young) than the classics; to

the lazy monk they stood in the place of novels, and to the more industrious they furnished exercises on a par with the Latin verse composition of the public schoolboy. To the more original reader, with a gift himself for writing, they made a delightful foundation for *fabliaux* and edifying stories and *contes*.

As the supremacy of Latin declined, and modern languages began to be turned to literary uses, the fable took on a new lease of life. But of all modern nations France alone has obtained any pre-eminence, and of but one poet, La Fontaine, can it be said that he stands in the true line of succession to the old fabulists.

La Fontaine (1621-1695) was first and foremost a poet, who wrote exquisitely modulated verse. To a great love of Nature, to a very passion of tenderness and pathos, he linked a joy in sly fun and delicate humour. He satirises indeed, but like Horace, he does not wound. He took the whole of society of the seventeenth century, its greatness, and its foibles, its splendour and its infamy, its luxury and its squalor, and with the magnificence of the lion and the antics of the ape, he portrayed it to the life.

Rousseau, at the height of his own fame, did his best to discredit the fable as a corrupter of youth;¹ but he failed miserably in his attempt; and to-day

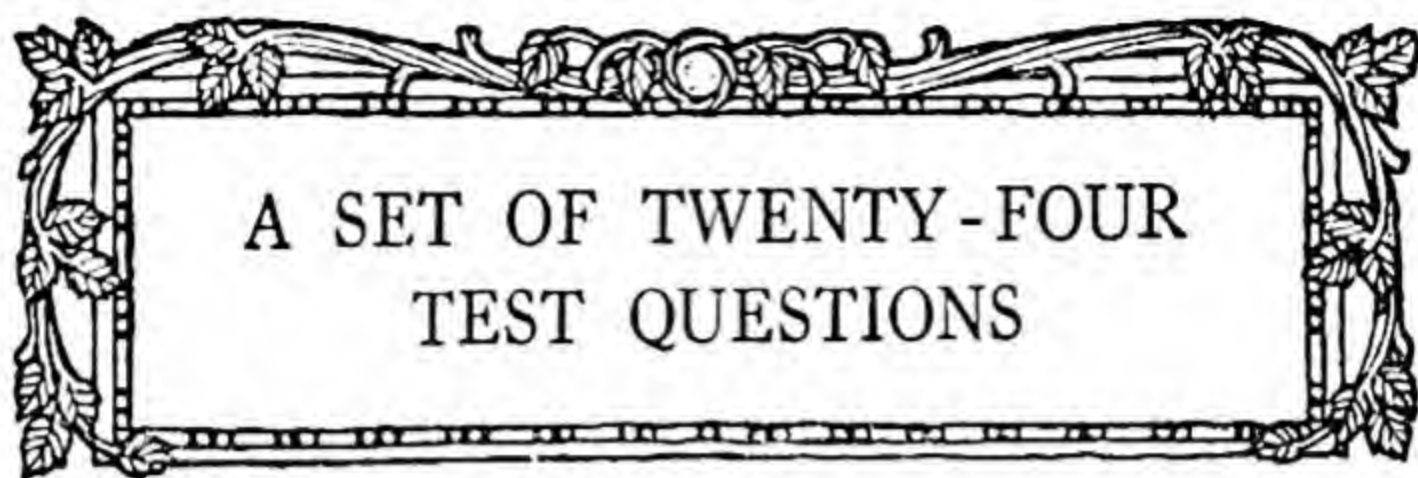
¹ It is a little difficult to understand Rousseau's stricture. The fable is essentially a moral precept illustrated by a single example, and it is the lesson thus enforced which gives a unity to the fable and makes it a work of art.

the fables of La Fontaine are studied in every school in France; and, as Anatole France slyly said, are more familiar to most Frenchmen than their breviary.

To-day the fable as a means of literary expression has fallen on evil times. We have the *Jungle Book* and *Uncle Remus*, but there is a whole world between "Brer Fox and Brer Rabbit" and "Le Chat, la Belette, et le Petit Lapin."

Finally, it may be interesting to consider why animals were chosen for fables. It was undoubtedly because animals have distinct characters which are universally known and recognised. Moreover, the fable arose in an age when man believed that beasts could talk and reason, that a wolf casually encountered might be a werewolf, a peacock strutting in the garden a Pythagoras in disguise, and a bear or stag the victim of enchantment; and there was the common apotheosis of the cat, the ox, the fish, the jackal, and indeed, at one period or another, of most of the creatures of the earth.

STEPHEN SOUTHWOLD.



A SET OF TWENTY-FOUR TEST QUESTIONS

FIRST SERIES

- (a) What do we call a person who writes fables?
- (b) Who were the two greatest writers of fables in the world?
- (c) Write a fable yourself about a spider, a bee, a butterfly and a caterpillar.
- (d) What do you think we may learn from the fable of the Acorn and the Pumpkin?
- (e) What is a parable? Give the names of six parables.
- (f) Write as well as you can remember it the parable you like best of all.

SECOND SERIES

- (a) If you had been amongst the people to whom Jesus told the Parable of the Prodigal Son, what question would you have liked to ask Him?
- (b) Write from memory the Parable of the Sower. What may we learn from this parable?
- (c) What does the name Æsop mean? Give another name with the same meaning. Write six sentences about Æsop himself.
- (d) Make up a fable about a donkey, a gnat and a thistle.

(e) What was the name of the great French fable writer? When did he live? Give the name of another great man living about this time.

(f) What may we learn from the fable of The Wolf and the Lamb?

THIRD SERIES

(a) Write from memory, in your own words, the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

(b) What did you think Jesus meant by the Parable of the Talents?

(c) Make up a fable about a horse, a wheelbarrow and a motor-cycle.

(d) Write in your own words the following fables from memory: The Fox and the Grapes; The Crow and the Pitcher; The Frog and the Ox; The Hare and the Tortoise.

(e) If you had heard Jesus tell the Parable of the Guests bidden to a Feast, what three questions would you have liked to ask Him?

(f) Which fable have you enjoyed most in this book? Which parable do you like best?

FOURTH SERIES

(a) Which fable in this book do you like least of all? Why?

(b) Make up a fable about a poppy, a daisy, a nettle, and a dandelion.

(c) Re-write the fable of the Ant and the Grasshopper so as to make it end happily and not sadly.

(d) Suppose that Æsop and La Fontaine could come to life again and meet. Write a short account of the talk they might have together; write it as a dialogue.

(e) Write down the names of any fables whose meaning you cannot understand.

(f) Write a short letter to Æsop telling him whatever you like. (You will not, of course, be able to post it!)



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